FONT COVER, ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

It is very probable, that in ancient times covers were considered a necessary adjunct to fonts, and that there were few erected in England without them. The material of which they are mostly constructed being wood, and liable to decay and accident, but few of these interesting objects are now found. The subject of the plate is a very fine one, it still remains suspended over the font at St. Dunstan's church, Canterbury. It is a good specimen, first, of the rich architectural features these font covers must often have presented, and secondly, of the ease with which they were constructed, for though they appear to be elaborate when completed, they are in truth of simple design. In this cover, there are only three pieces of separate pattern, these by being repeated eight times each, form the font cover. For the assistance of the young designer, I have given sketches of the three pieces with a portion of the plan, to shew how they are put together.

The font cover at Ewelme, in Oxfordshire, and that at Fosdyke, in Lincolnshire, are constructed upon similar principles. The effect of such composition, curious as it may seem to some, is the more beautiful, as the parts are less dissimilar.

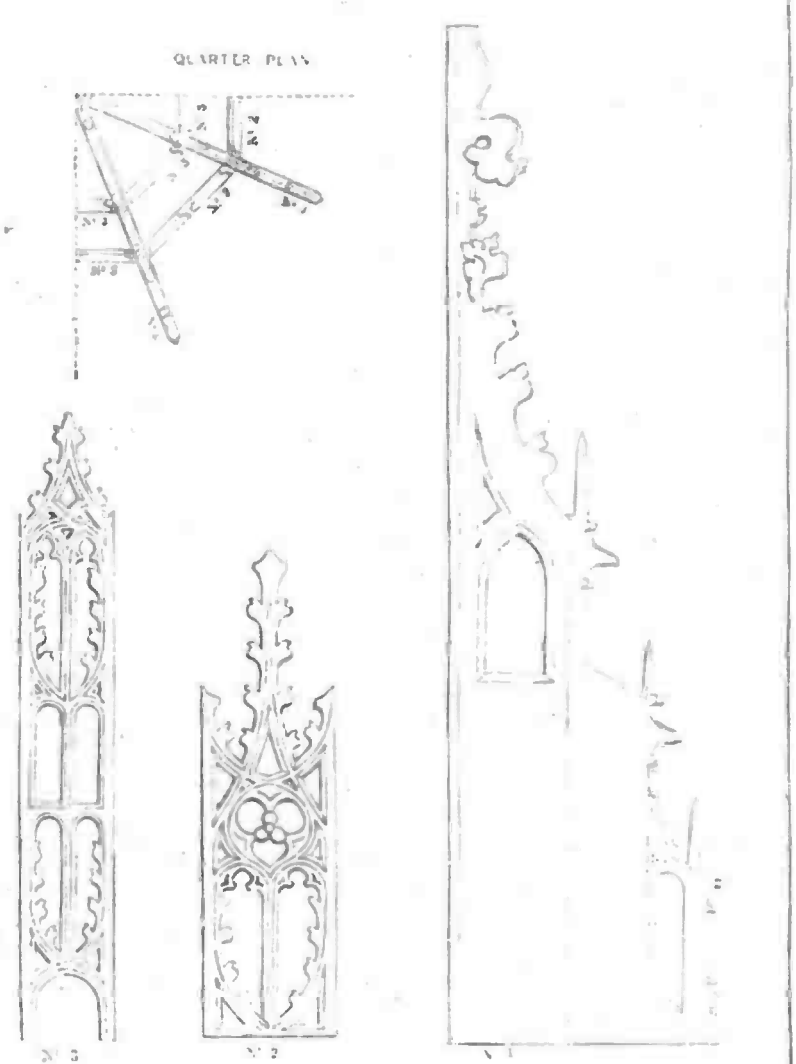
The font at St. Dunstan's is a plain stone octagon one, standing about 4 feet 10 inches in height, it is of similar date to the cover. Carter, in his great work on the ancient architecture of England, gives a print of the font and cover complete, but the latter is most strangely drawn, totally unlike the object it affects to represent. He places it among the specimens of the latter part of the reign of Edward the III. The style of the cover appears to me to be that of the middle of the sixteenth century, when Gothic architecture was rapidly becoming debased.

Few, very few font covers remain in England of earlier style than the one at St. Dunstan's church, but several can be found of similar character; at Littlebury church, in Essex, is a very curious one of very novel design, but it has been lately removed from its original position, and half destroyed.*

The facility, through the aid of machinery, with which all sorts of Gothic tracery and Elizabethan ornament, in wood or stone, can now be produced, will, before long, change the appearance of our architecture, giving the picturesque enrichments of the olden time both to our churches and domestic edifices; a font cover in oak, equally as rich as that of St. Dunstan's, can be made in London by Pratt's carving process for 15*l*. The young carver must exert his ability, and make the powers of his mind the rival of the forces of mechanical agency.

C. J. Richardson.

DETAILS OF FONT COVER TO ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH.



THE STAINED-GLASS FOR ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, PICCADILLY.

"To be designed in *keeping* with the interior, which is considered one of the finest specimens of Sir Christopher Wren's abilities."—Vide Mr. Mayhew's Circular to Artists, on July 16, 1844.

Sir,—As a constant subscriber to your valuable journal The Builder, your able and candid protest against the absurdity and manifest solecism about to be perpetrated in St. James's Church has naturally come under my notice, and is so correct, that it must, and will, no doubt, carry with it a conviction of justice and propriety to every rightly-informed mind, and thereby arrest the progress of such a monstrosity.

What can be inferred of a committee who could select for an Italian building an altar-window of a Gothic design, a positive compound of Norman and Early English, and in the face too of their very circular and the specified terms of it, viz. that it should "be designed in *keeping* with the *interior*, which is considered one of the finest specimens of Sir Christopher Wren's abilities?" I boldly assert the only conclusion that can be come to by any candid person is, that they have acted ignorantly and unjustly—ignorantly, seeing that a committee of their own paupers could not have committed so great a mistake, each of the other designs being in perfect accordance and in *keeping* with the interior; the one selected being the only exception—and unjustly, because by the terms and conditions they put forth they have misled and wasted the time and talent of artists, as well as wasted, by misapplication, the funds intrusted to them by the subscribers, by adopting an unfitting design, *not* "in keeping," &c. &c., from an artist who candidly confesses his incompetency to any other. What, Mr. Editor, would Sir Christopher Wren have said? that perhaps which Boileau has said—"nothing is beautiful which is false."

Mr. Willement and Messrs. Ward and Nixon wisely declined the *competition*, and, Sir, can it be wondered at, if, after such exhibitions of thoughtlessness in a number of eminent persons (who ought to know, and some of whom, no doubt, do know better)

> That artists in future should decline
> To throw their "pearls before the swine;"
> Donors, too, devotionally bent,
> May have a care their meed is not mis-spent.

I am, Sir, &c.,
William Warrington.
42, Berkeley-street, Hyde Park-square,
August 25, 1845.

In your article I believe you are not exactly correct in one point. The persons originally applied to (as I am informed) were Mr. Willement, Messrs. Ward and Nixon, Mr. Backler, and myself. Eventually the Duke of Cleveland and the Bishop of London wishing Mr. Wailes to be applied to, it was thought proper by the committee to open it to an extended competition. The Bishop of Armagh, the Bishop of London, and the Duke of Cleveland are, I perceive, the three principal subscribers with Mr. Byng.

FREE ADMISSION TO PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

On Saturday last a petition, signed by the mayor, magistrates, town council, clergy, and principal inhabitants of the city of Lincoln, to the number of 160, was forwarded to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, Bart., the premier, praying him in the appointment of the new dean to the cathedral chapter of that city, to have regard to the free admission of the public to the cathedral at proper periods. At present a fee of one shilling is demanded to view the interior; this acts as a severe tax upon the citizens, who may have visitors, and who, in shewing "the lions" of the city, do not like to be charged with a payment of one shilling per head for walking through an edifice, profusely rich in sculptured decorations and magnificent in its lofty slender columns and groined vaultings of the nave, yet possessing few attractions of stained glass or monumental records. The recent decease of Dean Gordon, the discussions in Parliament, the correspondence with the Dean of Westminster, and the various articles in the public prints, about the example given by the Deans of Durham and Norwich, have all suggested to the citizens of Lincoln the propriety of making the present effort for a free admission to the interior of the cathedral. Of course it is not intended to exempt those who are curious enough to clamber up the rood-tower, to visit the great "Tom bell," from the payment of a proper fee to the guide. The same remarks apply equally to York and other cathedrals in the country, where a disgraceful system of fee-taking is too frequently carried on.

As regards Norwich Cathedral being open to the public, we are disposed to think any person applying to view it would find they

* An engraving of this font and cover has been in our hands for some time, and will shortly be given in The Builder.—Ed.

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